

SIGHT and SOUND

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ON MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

Recently we visited a senior high school social studies class studying Problems of the Twentieth Century. The students were viewing a motion picture entitled *Margin for Victory: Washington's Intelligence Service*. This may seem like a peculiar choice of film to illustrate today's concerns, but it had been carefully chosen by the teacher and the class Materials Committee to serve two specific purposes: first, to present an authentic example of the way in which military intelligence affects strategy, and second, to stimulate discussion concerning the place of the Central Intelligence Agency in modern foreign relations. The film served these two objectives admirably.

Right here we must admit that this is a prejudiced account. The film the group was viewing is one of a series edited by a committee of the National Council for the Social Studies working in cooperation with the officials of Teaching Films Custodians. This subcommittee of the NCSS Audiovisual Committee has been occupied since 1946 in making excerpted versions of feature films for classroom use. The films under consideration, however, were originally produced for television by the DuPont Corporation under the title of the "Cavalcade of America Series." The entire series has been released for use in the schools, and our committee has edited them for classroom use. They are available on long-term lease from Teaching Films Custodians, Inc., 25 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036.

A utilization guide is provided with

each film. These guides are researched and written by John Braslin of TFC in consultation with the NCSS committee. The synopsis of the film *Margin for Victory: Washington's Intelligence Service* will indicate the nature of these dramatic episodes.

"In 1780, at his headquarters on Staten Island in New York Harbor, General Sir Henry Clinton is shown by an aide a proposed handbill offering a reward to be paid by the British Army for any information leading to the capture of the American spy, known as Culper, Junior. Clinton angrily orders that the handbills be destroyed. He states that such publicity would be an admission to the Americans of the damage Culper, Junior had inflicted. He then confers with General Wilhelm von Knyphausen, the commander of the Hessian forces employed by the British. Clinton knows that a strong French force coming to the Americans' aid is enroute from abroad and about to land at Newport, Rhode Island. He is concerned that if he dispatches the bulk of his troops to Newport, General Washington might attack and capture New York City. Knyphausen urges Clinton to lead an expedition to Newport to wipe out the French before they can become organized upon disembarking. The Hessian claims he can withstand any attack upon New York with his own troops because the Americans are in no condition for a full-scale effort. Clinton defers his decision as he is uncertain that Knyphausen's estimate of Washington's strength is accurate. He leaves, stating he has a dinner engage-

ment with his friends Robert Townsend and Robert's sister, Sarah, prominent American Tories.

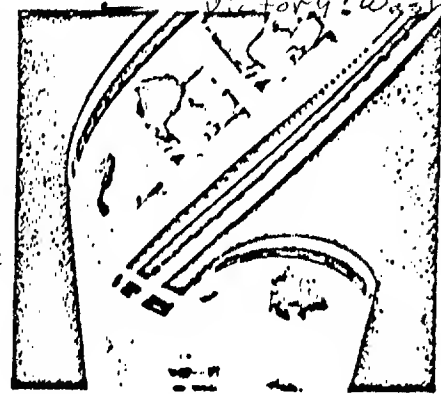
"As Clinton confers with Knyphausen, in the New York waterfront warehouse of Townsend and Company, Robert Townsend, the supposed Tory, is writing secret reports to General Washington. He signs them 'Culper, Jr.'

"Meanwhile, General Clinton is at dinner with Sarah Townsend. She explains that her brother is absent because they have arranged a surprise in the form of a theatrical presentation. Robert has been rehearsing a play which is to be performed that evening. The general expresses amazement at the range of Robert's talents.

"As he prepares to leave the warehouse to take part in the play, Robert is informed by his courier, Austin Roe, that the theater is shuttered and dark. Robert immediately deduces that British naval officers in the cast of the play have been called to sea duty and that the fleet is preparing to carry troops to Newport. He leaves for a vantage point to observe activity among the ships.

"Townsend's deduction proves correct. Clinton has decided to risk an attack on New York by leading an expedition to Newport. Aboard the flagship, he explains his strategy for attacking the French to his officers. In the event Washington attacks Knyphausen in New York, the expedition is to be alerted and recalled to the city by means of beacon fires along Long Island. An American agent disguised as a British guard signals Clinton's plans to Townsend by lantern.

Original under
CIA S. P. 2.1



C.I.A. 2.01.1
McNamara, Robert
Soc. 4.01.2 The Essence
of Security